

Prayer for Relief from Adversaries

Psalm 70, it's a shorter one, but no less powerful for all that. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God, Psalm 70. Make haste, O God, to deliver me.

Make haste to help me, O Lord. Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life. Let them be turned back and confused who desire my hurt.

Let them be turned back because of their shame who say, Aha, aha. Let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

But I am poor and needy. Make haste to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer, O Lord.

Do not delay. Let us pray. Here, God, in this Psalm, we read of a cry of help and deliverance, gracious Lord, in which David cries out for help, for he needs haste and that help immediately because the situation is dire.

So he rejoices knowing that you will deliver him, that you indeed shall save him, as we know the stories over and over again in the book of Samuel, verse king. So, God, may this also be our Psalm. There is a time in which we cry out for relief from our adversaries, from the enemies of the people of God.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we pray. May we be encouraged thereby to have this Psalm as part of our life as well. Amen.

What do we do with injustices and dangers as Christians? This is actually an ongoing concern. We don't always think of it that way explicitly, perhaps because I believe the case for most of us, we have it fairly resolved. But you will find at times, even today, Christians are confused about this matter.

There's confusion about what to do with such Psalms as this. We are indeed called to love. And because of that, does that mean we cannot pray for punishment as well? Or are we just to ask for conversions of our adversaries only? We know that Romans 12, for example, reminds us to curb any strong desires for vengeance, instead to show kindness.

Therefore, we read in verse 20, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink. For in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. And that seems to be the end of that. And yet we read elsewhere in the same set of verses in chapter 12, a few verses earlier, if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Clearly he's saying it may not be possible. And of course, we know by experience and history in the Bible itself, it's not always possible. Sometimes it's quite impossible.

And so there's not much you can do in that case. Paul, in fact, uses the law course to defend his preaching. He doesn't just sit there and say, well, you know, I'm supposed to show love to the Roman empire and the Roman army and these soldiers.

And so I'm not going to appease it, appeal to Rome, because it may get them in trouble. Because they were, they should have got in trouble for being a Roman citizen, because that's what they did. But there is no contradiction.

If we understand the difference between private or personal harm and private enemies and loss of possessions, for example, versus public harm and public dangers, like, I friend's mom, a few weeks ago, was guiding her blind friend down some stairs from a restaurant. So apparently they were leaving. And at the bottom, a vagrant was in the way.

She asked, of course, politely that he would move. But instead of making way for an older woman and her blind friend, he shoved her to the ground. Her friend started screaming and the people ran out to chase him off.

And he was eventually arrested, but we don't know what's going to happen therein, if he'll ever be prosecuted for that. Naturally, he asked for prayer and justice to be done. Unfortunately, the prayer was one-sided, thankful for no lasting harm, which is good upon his mother, who's, of course, older.

But also, there was an asking for mercy upon him, just as we have mercy in Christ, which, of course, is true and is a good thing. But it's not the whole story when it comes to things like Psalm 70. Christians can pray for the conversions of criminals, and we ought, but they can also pray for justice.

We can do both. In fact, we know the Spirit uses the law to bring what? Conviction of sin. Not just the law, the abstract, or the law kind of like, well, hopefully he'll read the Bible, but the law applied in society with judgment, in fact.

And there are stories, I've read some, I don't know a lot, I'm not aware of any books that collect a lot of this stuff, of people converted because of the punishment brought upon them by the judicial system. And they write letters, and they acknowledge their guilt and the like. That's good, that's good and proper.

It's actually being useful there. And so we can, indeed, and have seen examples of praying for conversion, but done through the law of God or through punishment itself. Because punishment and done right, of course, in context of God's law is a good thing.

So prayer for justice can be used with the hope of conversion would ensue. Both can be done. So what we have here is one of the classic imprecatory psalms.

It may not seem that obvious to you because it's a much more milder imprecatory psalm. It's nothing about destroying my enemies and casting them down and things like that, but it is considered an imprecatory psalm. An imprecatory psalm, I'll remind you again, that's an adjectival form of the word imprecation, which means a curse or malediction as opposed to a benediction, a good word.

Specifically, it's calling upon God to bring judgment upon his enemies. Usually, the judgment is, of course, temporary, some punishment in this life. So let's look more carefully here at the psalm to learn a prayer for relief from harm and even prayers for justice.

Prayer for Relief from Adversaries

So the first point here, I'm going to divide this more logically or thematically, because we have two parts. The beginning, make haste, O God, deliver me, make haste to me. And he describes in verses two and three what has been going on, and then at the end, he sort of repeats himself, I am poor and needy, make haste to me, O God, you are my help and my deliverer, verse five.

And it's a different theme or idea here is in verse four, let all those who seek and rejoice in you and have joy in your salvation, that God be magnified. So two things are going on in these verses. So the first point then is verses one, three, and five.

To show us the relief he is seeking, what the relief is for, why this is significant, why does he have this imprecation, we'll see in verses two and three. The context then is the first and last verse is explaining pretty clearly, it's a pressing matter, something serious is going on, that he's crying out that God would hurry up, make haste, O God, to deliver me, make haste to help me, O Lord, make haste to me, O God, verse five. Three times he says that.

The last verse he is emphatic, not just make haste, make haste, make haste, O Lord, do not delay. Sometimes serious matters require timely resolution and a prayer that reflects that pertinent requirement. In other words, it's not necessarily impatient to ask God to fix something immediately when the situation warrants it.

I don't believe David here is being sinful, requesting immediate help for an immediate emergency, any more than we would if we got in a car accident, we lost our family, our house was on fire, a flood came along, we ought to cry out, Lord, I need help now. Something wrong with that, everything good with it. Our God, our Father wants us as his children to ask for help, and not timidly, but with robustness because we believe he will answer us, he will hear us, of course, answer us one way or the other.

And so it is not wrong. In his case, in such a matter, when death is imminent, we're not impatient to ask God for help because we read in verse two there, let them be ashamed and confound her, what? Who seek my life. That's pretty serious.

They want to kill him. Let them be turned back and confused, who what? Desire my hurt. So there's that parallelism again, right, in the poetry of Hebraic Psalms, where he's saying hurt and life are clearly taking my life and hurting me are the same idea, said differently.

It's a very serious matter. And these men who wish to kill him and hurt him, obviously, are guilty of what we would call today hate crime, although unfortunately it's only certain things are hate crimes. Everything else is, I guess, oh, indifferent crimes.

I don't know. It's clearly not an expression of love. This is an expression of hate.

They hate David. Probably when David was king. We don't know often of the context of the Psalms, but most of his life, we know he was king.

And so life-threatening in this case would mean attacking the civil magistrate. And unfortunately, we have seen that in our lifetime more than once for some of us. The older generation remembers Kennedy, for example.

And these men, although we don't know the particulars other than enough to know that it's very dangerous and needs to be dealt with quickly, they mock him. Let them be turned back, verse 3, because of their shame who say, aha, aha. Now, that's incomplete, of course.

Aha what? Where is he driving at? And we talk this way sometimes. We're kind of incomplete or abbreviated in our way of speaking. But probably it's something along the lines of, aha, we got you now.

We got your corner now, buddy. We're going to get you. You can't get away from us.

That's why he's crying out for deliverance. Psalm 35, verse 21, we read, they also opened their mouth wide against me and said, aha, aha, our eyes have seen it. We see, we know what's going on.

Something like that is going on here as well, because this is clearly those who are wicked and wish to kill him and destroy him. Now, he describes himself, so we're describing, I'm going through the context of what his concern is here. He describes himself in verse 5, I am poor and needy, and then continues to finish the psalm crying out for immediate relief.

Was King David poor and needy? No, not as we sometimes use the phrase today. Well, you're poor and needy. You need help.

You need financial aid. He means this with respect to the situation he finds himself in. I have no means to stop them, even as King, one who's disadvantaged by those who would kill him.

He's trapped. Like when we say, for example, that poor guy, he couldn't get help. We don't mean he's literally without money.

We just meant he's in a sad, poor situation. But also, I think he's expressing his heart and his humility before God. I am poor and needy.

I'm the kind of guy who needs your help, God, because I can do nothing without you. Spiritually or morally speaking, he is poor and needy. And he prays for relief thereby in verse 2 and 3. This now drills into the imprecations of this psalm.

Let them be ashamed and confounded. Let them be turned back. He says that twice.

Let them be turned back and confused. And then in verse 3, let them be turned back because of their shame. Turn away or turn back from their plans, apparently, is the idea

here, which may not be a judgmental as such or imprecation as such, that just simply the enemies would stop being troublemakers, or they would be redirected elsewhere and turned away from coming after him as the target.

He's got this big bullseye on his back, for example. Something along those lines, seeking relief, in other words, from the sinful actions or the plans and machinations of others. And of course, this is the prayer all of us should imbibe upon, that God would turn back those who would destroy the church of God or even come after us, or even our private enemies.

I haven't gotten there, that distinction yet, that they would indeed turn back, which isn't a judgmental prayer as such, but just simply stop. Lord, I want them to stop. I wish they would just leave me alone.

This is bad stuff. And that's certainly what he seems to be saying here at a minimum, and something certainly we should all continue to pray as well. But turn back is coupled with stronger language as well, and so that minimal now is growing to something else.

Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life. Let them be turned back. Let them be turned back because of their shame.

He's saying all this as we would say today, all in one breath. It's the same idea, ashamed and confounded, also being turned back. I don't think because it is poetry that he's trying to get very precise exactly what kind of things he wants.

He's like, I want all this done, and if that means I have to be ashamed and confounded who seek my life, then so be it. This ought to be the case because I got to be preserved God. And so there, there's an implication of punishment.

How would they be ashamed or confounded who desire my hurt and turn back because of their shame? Because something bad is happening to them. That's why it's put under the category of an imprecatory psalm. And this is considered one of the handfuls, as I mentioned, imprecatory psalms.

I think there's like seven or eight of them. And one of the mildest ones to boot, and yet it's still there. He's not saying, let them be prosperous God and save their souls.

That's why it falls under imprecations, but ashamed and confounded. David's concern here and his other imprecatory psalms, one thing we should note, is public. It's a public concern, not a private concern.

He is a king exercising his public office. It's not dealing with a personal vendetta or petty bickering. Your neighbor may have done you wrong.

He may have never returned the lawnmower he's supposed to return. You know that happens. And so what do you do? You turn the other cheek.

You lose the two or three hundred bucks it costs to take the lawnmower. Even if you ask him about it, he may just say, I don't know what you're talking about. Even go to court over it? No, you got to live with your neighbor.

You turn the other cheek. It's hard, but this is what we are called to do. Jesus talks about this in the Sermon on the Mount.

Turn the other cheek. And not always is that the case. We know Jesus didn't mean there in the Sermon on the Mount in an absolute sense, but in a normative sense, this is what's often expected, especially with regard to personal and private matters in which we have problems with one another.

Because the simple fact is Christ gave us church courts and the apostles exercised them and disciplined people. Were they turning the other cheek? Of course not. That doesn't fit that pattern at all.

Is Christ contradicting himself? Is Paul against Jesus? Is the New Testament apostles against Jesus? Of course not. A thousand times no. So there's a confusion then in our reading of the Sermon on the Mount by absolutizing it and saying in every and all situations we're supposed to turn the other cheek, in which case Christians should never be civil magistrates.

Because I don't want my civil magistrate turning the other cheek when my city is being burned down. And I don't think you do either. But that's exactly what the Anabaptist taught.

And unfortunately it has infected the churches today to one degree or another. There are Anabaptist influences today. And even to some degree in Reformed circles you'll run across this at times.

A milder version, a more subtle version as it were, but it's still there. You're like, well, I don't understand. What is going on here? Because there's a confusion between private and public, and public authority, and public harm, and public danger.

That's why we have church courts, a time not to turn your cheek in serious matters. I mean, Paul emphasizes that in 1 Corinthians, right? He says, don't you have your own leaders who can judge amongst you? Why do you go to the civil courts, the pagan courts, the secular courts? You should, what, judge amongst yourselves and deal with these matters instead of going to court. That's horrendous, he says.

And of course there's also degrees of wickedness. So the public versus private harm is significant in itself, of course. But with respect to a greater public sin, so private doesn't mean, oh, you can privately murder somebody and get away with it.

It's just one category amongst others. It's private and public as well as the degree of the sin, the heinousness of the sin. Private murders are still public murders because you're killing a person.

It just publicly affects everybody. There's no way around it. Lies, white lies.

Like I said, your neighbor lied to you. Not only did he steal your lawnmower, he lied about it. He goes, I don't know what you're talking about.

What? Maybe he sold it later. I don't know. So you never saw it again.

He got some money off of it. You're like, okay, well, you leave it in the Lord's hand. You're done.

Okay. You still try to be nice to your neighbor and whatnot. But you're not going to do that with a mass murderer, I hope.

A child trafficker? No. So the degree of the sin, the consequences thereof, et cetera, et cetera, make a difference. In fact, you'd call the cops in some cases.

You're just like, I'm going to call the cops. There's New Testament examples of prayer for justice, which is what imprecations are of the Old Testament. He's praying for justice, although he gets a little more specific at times.

Do this and do that. Here, it's kind of vague, but still clear enough that it's not a prayer of a blessing. That's not a benediction, words of goodness towards his enemies.

Acts 8.18, when Simon saw that through the laying on of hands of the apostles, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money saying, give me this power also that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit. Every time I read that, I keep thinking, I don't understand. How could this guy, what? Here he is.

But Peter said to him, verse 20, your money perish with you. Catch that? You both perish. Is that a benediction, a good word? It is good insofar as it's truthful.

That's true. But it's not turning the other cheek. It's not a blessing, is it? That's a warning of the judgment.

For you have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness and pray, God, perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. Galatians 1.8, but even if we, Paul writes, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than that we have preached to you, let him be anathema, you'll read in some translations, which doesn't sound as bad as accursed.

It's the same word, though. Did you hear the word cursed and accursed, which is clearly not turning the other cheek in the sense that people use it today, not obviously contradicting Jesus, and not a blessing. 2 Timothy 4.14, we haven't gotten there yet in the morning.

Alexander the coppersmith, Paul writes, did me much harm. We don't know what it is, just that he did much harm, presumably on a public scale, because he's writing about it publicly, because he's a public officer as well, Paul is. So again, what's interesting in these examples is what? They're public.

They're not private problems and brouhahas and difficulties and private enemies who just, they don't like you for whatever reason. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.

Listen to that. That's strong language. That's really amazing.

What works should the Lord repay to him in the context? Punishment, clearly, but he leaves it in God's hand, I think, ultimately saying, you know, the Lord wills and maybe he'll convert him, which is our prayer as well. We wish for the conversion of our enemies. I don't want them going to hell.

I heard of this recently. Our friend here has contacts down south of the border, as you know, and he said a kingpin was recently killed and one of their, they don't have states down there, I guess, one of the districts or something, killed this, you know, gang leader. They cause all kinds of problems down there.

They cause problems up here as well, and he has been killed, and I was asked, is it wrong for me to be happy that some justice was served? It's like, no, no. We'll talk about that sermon tonight. Here it is.

That's the implication here is this is a good thing. It's not a bad thing to pray for justice, but at the same time, you, as being human, recognize, I don't wish the guy would go to hell. It's not like, yeah, I wish he'd go to hell.

It's not a pleasant thought, in other words. We can do both. First Corinthians 16.22, if anyone does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed, O Lord, come.

So we can imitate both the Old Testament and New Testament prayers, but with proper care and caution here, not just anyone in terms of praying for justice. I make it more positive than the negative imprecation language that we use in describing the Psalms because they are also prayers for justice, but for great public injustices in particular that we pray for, especially against God, enemies of God as God, God's anointed, God's people, and of course, not with any petty hatred or bitterness, always with a willing heart to receive any who will repent. There are prison conversions.

Like the church received, I don't know, a persecutor of his people in the book of Acts. Who was that? Paul, or Saul, who became Paul. And what's quite fascinating, at least to me, maybe it's just me, is that they didn't want anything to do with him the first time.

They're like, whoa, this is Paul? What? I'm sorry. And God, I can't remember his name, told the man who's basically a prophet, Paul's going to come to you, and he's like, Lord, he even tells God, I think through an angel, God, he's killed our people. Why do I want to bring him to me? And in other words, God had to give him a supernatural reason to receive him and his word because he could, of course, be lying.

I mean, people are incarcerated for a reason. They have high recidivism rates. In other words, they keep going back to prison for a reason.

They're liars and thieves and murderers. That's who they are, and we shouldn't be naive about that. And he didn't want to be naive, so God gave him a supernatural revelation that, no, this is okay now.

It's okay. I think that's significant because it is a natural and therefore, I think, proper to be cautious in those kind of circumstances. But we should be willing to receive the repentant.

So prayers for justice should be accompanied with the hope that the enemies of God would indeed be converted. A punishment brought upon them would be such that would break their hardened hearts, and sometimes that may mean lifetime incarceration or the death penalty. If you are converted and you therefore are repentant, because conversion means you will acknowledge your sins, that you deserve hell and eternal damnation.

If you are a criminal, and the eyes of man, and so far as you've broken the laws here on earth as well, if you're a converted Christian, you will say, I will take the punishment. I mean, being a Christian doesn't mean you don't have to give back the money you stole. You killed a life, you may lose your life, but you're going to go to heaven.

And I believe a converted Christian knows this, and he will accept that punishment. These are, I hope, commonsensical. It makes sense, but I fear I know in our circles, and you may have friends in those as well, we meet all kinds of Christians, and they don't always think that way.

You'd be surprised. And other considerations as well, there are no naming of names in the imprecatory Psalms. You're not given a name, who exactly is he talking about here? And I think that's probably a pretty good pattern in terms of praying for public justice, although in some cases, it's so obvious that we know who we're talking about, like, I don't know, doctors killing babies, for example.

We don't have to give their names, but we all know who we're talking about. And they often don't specify punishment in many of the imprecations there of the Psalms, although some are pretty graphic. And again, always with the hope that the curse upon them would yield good results, because God can use bad things to bring about good results, as only he can.

There are different types of imprecations. We already got this idea here when I expressed and explained here in Psalm 70, pretty mild, that they're ashamed and confounded, that could be all kinds of, you know, very unharmed situations and the like under his scenario. But them trying to seek his life, of course, it would be pretty strong shame and confoundedness being brought upon them to reflect the nature of their harm they try to bring upon David himself.

But it's relatively mild in terms of the specificity of the prayer for justice. Serious Psalms, of course, here are more specific and harsher. Here, later on, we're going to run across some of those.

This one is just the three words there, ashamed, confounded, and confused. The judgment here, of course, is to the extent that David will get the relief from difficulties and dangers for upon him that he desires. But the restraint in the imprecatory Psalms is quite interesting.

We have one that's even more restrained in some regards. Psalm 59, that's I did my longer preaching on imprecatory Psalms and explain a little more than I have here in my notes. He specifies there not to slay them.

So don't think, in other words, of imprecatory Psalms is only about dashing them across rocks all the time. That's not all. It's only one Psalm like that.

Other ones where he says, don't slay them, don't kill them, rather scatter them about so they would become a living lesson to the rest of the world. Now, Psalm 83, another imprecatory Psalm. Verse 16, we read something slightly different, another direction.

Fill their faces with shame, we read, that they may seek your name, O Lord. So here we have David's imprecatory Psalm 83, where he cries out for justice. He cries out for vengeance in the best sense of the word.

I know growing up, every time I heard the word vengeance, it always meant a bad thing, but not in the Bible translations. You know, some of these words translate to vengeance or justice. He says there, in that Psalm, fill their faces, fill my enemies' faces with shame, like he says here, let them be ashamed, right? Same idea.

Right, to this end, that they may seek your name, O Lord. I can't read that other than that they would cry out for mercy, they would repent. His prayer for a malediction, a bad word for his enemies, is for a good end, which is, in other words, bring punishment upon them that they would have shame and seek you, God.

Use the law of God here in a public sense of justice, of judges, of prison time, and threats and whatnot, so that it would soften their hearts. King David, that's part of his prayer. And so we have, therefore, good reasons to do both and have it in a proper proportion, I believe, here, tampered with mercy always.

Injustice today, of course, is real, murdering unborn babies, selling their parts. I just can't believe I have this written down on my notes in this day and age. This is where we are.

It's horrendous. Mutilating children, as we know, through gender operations, trafficking women and kids, which is on the rise, unfortunately, in Colorado in the last five years. It's astounding.

And so we pray for what? Justice to be served, righteousness to reign across this state of ours, even as we pray for their conversion. I want them converted, man to man, woman to woman. Our first empathy is, I don't want you destroyed.

This is terrible. I wouldn't want them tortured as such in hell forever. They're both there.

This is where we are in this fallen world. But we especially pray, of course, for the church, for Christians, for our fellow believers. Murdering covenant children, trafficking Christian women is worse in that sense, because they are the children of God.

Suppressing gospel churches through violence, we ran across that recently. Not overt violence, but intimidation and scaring the populace there at the church. And of course, we should never forget the truly persecuted Christians across the world and pray for them, pray for their justice.

We read that in Book of Revelation. The saints' blood cries out from under the throne for justice, for vengeance, avenge us, God. And we should have that as our prayer as well for God's people.

Pray for the relief, pray for the protection, pray for justice. And of course, it may not happen in this life, but God will answer it at the great white throne. There will be justice one way or the other, but also zeal.

The prayer against injustices and harms of all types is a good thing in its place and proper proportion, of course, as I gave the qualifiers. But what's related to this as well, there should be a proper zeal for justice, for righteousness, for protection and vindication of the truth in the public square. Zeal against gross injustices is a good thing in its place.

Jesus drove out the money changers. Apostles verbally judged others as we read there, Peter in Acts 8. David as king should have zeal for justice. We don't want magistrates who are utterly indifferent and being walked over all the time.

And unfortunately, we see that sometimes in America. We want our leaders and church leaders the same way as well. Of course, it's not the same as vindictiveness.

Rules and courts and the like do consider circumstances. They do exercise mercy in the courts. And we do the same in the church.

You ought to have churches like that. So get rid of the extremes in your mind when I'm speaking of we want leaders to be zealous for the truth, but also with mercy and a proper proportion. Calvin's sermon on Jeremiah 15, which you won't easily find, it's this little booklet here.

They have some translations of his sermons. We read there in Jeremiah 15, Oh Lord, you know, remember me and visit me and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. This is Jeremiah.

And Calvin's commentary is this. If we demand vengeance, he means justice, of course, let it not be out of self-interest and unbridled passion. And then we can say that our zeal is like that of the prophet if there is the last bitterness in us, we have nothing in common with the prophet. That's a high bar, isn't it?

Praise for Deliverance From Adversaries

Lastly here, verse four, praise for deliverance from adversities or the adversaries, excuse me. Praise of faith. Verse four, let all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.

Let those who love your salvation say continually, let God be magnified. Seeking God for justice in this life, but especially for the next is embracing our Lord and Savior. And that's a good thing.

The one who took our deserved punishment is Jesus. He satisfied divine justice for us, brothers and sisters. And so in praying such things, we of course feel the sting of our own weaknesses and sins.

We're like, well, you know, I too am a sinner God, but he tells us, no, but you are a redeemed sinner and you ought to stand firm and rejoice in the deliverance I have for you in vindicating you and protecting you from your enemies. And that's a good thing. It's a great cause for rejoicing for David.

It should be for us when we see it, the vindication of his people and history and the protection of his people and the like, to know that he does not turn back anyone, in fact, who repents and believes in him. He'll take all enemies. We were his enemies.

In fact, thus God is magnified, brothers and sisters. Our Lord God is magnified. Let God be lifted up, shown to the whole world as the idea of magnification, as marvelous and a wonderful Lord, both for justifying us in Christ Jesus and that by faith alone, as well as delivering us from the enemies of Christ and those who would tear us down and bring us to hell.

In sum, as one writer explained, there is rejoicing in God's justice because the alternative is unthinkable, heaven populated with God's enemies. You're no longer his enemy. Remember that.

Your thought may be, oh, I was, you were, past tense. He's saying present tense. That would not be justice, but a dangerous thing indeed.

Rejoicing in God's vindication is the picture here in verse 4. We can rejoice that God has protected us in his church and when he has vindicated our just cause, not out of pride even more than David was prideful, but rather acknowledging God's goodness to us. This is what this is here in verse 4. Brothers and sisters, it is not shameful to pray for relief and even justice when the situation is especially dire and praying for haste, Lord, come quickly, we need you. Never stop praying even as we hope for the conversion of those who hate us.

Let us pray. Indeed, God almighty, help temper us, Lord, if we are given to passions in this regard, unbridled passions and anger and vindictiveness, but rather, oh Lord, may we have the proper zeal and proportion of wanting the right to be righted, Lord, the wrong to be righted and have the right thing done for your people and even for our unbelievers that they would have justice in the courts. But God almighty, in all these things, keep us humble, we pray, that we would always keep an eye upon mercy, that we would pray as the psalmist does in Psalm 83, God, that they would be brought to shame so that in order they would look to you, seek you, God, we pray in conversion and repentance by the blood of our Lord and Savior.

Amen.